

Laura Silla¹

For Adele

Whenever I spent an afternoon with Adele, I felt like time was infinite and full of possibilities, I felt truly listened to and alive—Adele was not only smart, charismatic and caring, but she was enormously complex—we could discuss art, history, sociology, medicine, philosophy, and culture, because Adele truly knew something about everything. Something that always struck me about Adele was how generous she was with her time. Even though she was always so involved with school and the students, the art community, and her friends and relatives, she always managed to make time for you and to be fully present during that time.

Adele could make you feel like the sun was shining on you in the middle of a storm, and you would leave the conversation feeling as though you understood more about the human condition, and like someone truly *understood* you on a deep level. Adele was like that. She was so empathetic and could connect to people in a way that made you feel as though life was never about obstacles but rather *possibilities*. When we were together, she never checked her watch or seemed elsewhere in her thoughts. She gave all of her time to other people, to friends, to family, and to students, so it is heartbreakingly ironic that so much time was taken from Adele, that she didn't have the opportunity to get old. Yet I find comfort in knowing that Adele was always one to make the very best of every moment that she had. She was so fiercely strong and independent as a person, unafraid to try new things, defend what she believed was right, convinced of the power one

¹ Tirocinante americana, laureata nel 2014 all'Università di Filadelfia, tirocinante al *Ferraris* nell'a.s. 2015/16.

individual had in changing the world; yet she was also vulnerable and without barriers, ready to open herself up to love and accept others exactly as they are — something many of us are sometimes too scared to do for fear of getting hurt. Coming to Italy, I was nervous, didn't speak the language well, not sure how to handle the situation with my *permesso di soggiorno* with the *Questura*, and unsure if I would make any friends. Adele, was, in a way, my conduit for Italian culture.

Without Adele, I am not sure what I would have done — she helped me battle the isolation one feels in a foreign country, she helped me to understand some of the beautiful subtleties of Italian culture, and she tried to help me improve my Italian. She translated to pharmacists when I was ill, and she helped me in difficult travel situations. She encouraged me to follow my dream to become a doctor and helped me to get into medical school to help others, because, to her, helping others was the most important thing you could do in life. And Adele always did that. She was my first friend, and that made all the difference with my experiences.

Someone once told me that you don't miss places, but the people who, to you, represent those places. Adele to me will always represent the best parts of Italy, her generosity, her true beauty — inside and out — and her boundless compassion and energy will be with me the rest of my life.



For Cristina

Thanks Cristina for reading this. I know it's a little long and if there's not enough time to read it all then I understand. I am heartbroken not to be there, but it was not possible for me to make it there from the city I live in now by the time of the funeral. I wanted to tell you that it felt like it was only yesterday when Adele and you organized our first lunch date: you made delicious pumpkin gnocchi, I met Anna Chiara. We sat around the table in that fall of 2015, talking and laughing, and I felt so blessed to be there. I will love all of you the rest of my life, and we will always share that memory together.

Thank you for everything

Laura

